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SUBJECT: POLITICAL ROUNDUP - ARRESTS AND APPOINTMENTS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Over the past several days, the CNDD reportedly arrested a number of prominent military figures, including some civilians. The CNDD also announced a number of promotions within the officer corps and at the ministerial level--including the promotion of the controversial 2LT Claude Pivi to Minister of Presidential Security. Additionally, the CNDD consolidated four previously separate commando battalions into one regiment. END SUMMARY.

FOUR GENERALS, CIVILIANS DETAINED AT CAMP ALPHA YAYA

¶2. (SBU) According to Embassy sources, military officials recently arrested four prominent former generals--former Army Chief of Staff Diarra Camara, former Navy Chief of Staff Aly Daffe, former Navy Deputy Chief of Staff Fassiriman Traore, and former General Kandet Toure. Camara, Daffe, and Traore are still being held; Toure was released on Monday. No formal charges have been announced. A source told DATT that the ex-generals were being held on suspicion of corruption and/or plotting a counter coup. (COMMENT: Though an internet news source (aminata.com) suggested that the arrests might signal a purge, the completion of several government audits of the public sector that uncovered corruption might also explain the arrests. END COMMENT.)

¶3. (SBU) General Camara was reportedly arrested at 18:30 on a Sunday by armed soldiers who said that President Camara needed to see him immediately. When Camara offered to visit the president the following day, the soldiers insisted that he go immediately. Once at the camp, Camara was reportedly asked three questions before being locked up: (1) What actions have you taken since 2000? (2) What relations did you have with former President Conte? and (3) Why did you travel to Guinea-Bissau with former Prime Minister Soaure? Camara answered all the questions.

¶4. (SBU) Sources also reported that fourteen other people, both civilians and military, are also being held at Camp Alpha Yaya without charge, among them one journalist. Some have been in custody for over 10 days. While the source feared that the individuals might be subject to torture, no one has yet reported mistreatment. A number of the detainees have medical conditions, including diabetes and high blood pressure, that have not been treated. Poloff informed International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and Catholic Relief Services to make them aware of the arrests and alert them to potential human rights abuses. ICRC encouraged the victims, families to contact the NGO so that they could make specific inquiries and provide humanitarian assistance.

PIVI APPOINTED MINISTER; NEW SEC GEN OF THE PRESIDENCY

¶5. (SBU) Via military proclamation, the president appointed former mutiny leader and highly controversial CNDD member 2LT Claude Pivi (aka "Coplan") as Minister of Presidential Security on 6 January. (COMMENT: While Pivi's title has changed, sources say that he essentially remains the president's bodyguard. END COMMENT.)

¶6. (SBU) In a separate act, the CNDD appointed Captain Keleti Faro as the new Minister Secretary General of the Presidency.

Faro replaced Alpha Ibrahima Keira, the infamous minister who vowed to punish demonstrators during the January 2007 strike. Though little is known about the new minister, a source in the 19th Promotion described Faro as thoughtful and insightful, but worried that the president's entourage would drown out his voice.

RESTRUCTURING AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

¶7. (SBU) Three recent military ordinances issued after January 5 granted promotions within the armed forces and reorganized four critical battalions. Despite a suspension of promotions announced shortly after the coup, the first ordinance (No. 16) promoted nine officers in the lower ranks of the officer corps. The second (No. 17) announced several nominations to the general staff, and the third (No. 18) folded four previously separate commando units--the Red Beret Presidential Guard, the Airborne Battalion (BATA), the Rangers, and the Chinese-trained commando unit in

CONAKRY 00000020 002 OF 002

Kindia--into one regiment.

COMMENT

¶8. (SBU) To date, the CNDD seems to have been carefully avoiding any actions that could be construed as possible human rights abuses. Embassy sources indicate that no human rights abuses have occurred, other than illegal detention without formal charges filed, but Embassy is watching the situation closely. Pivi's rapid rise to a ministerial position, despite claims that it is a position in name only, is disturbing. END COMMENT.
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